

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN  
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

**May 15, 2001**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Sysyn.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault and Hirschmann

Absent: Alderman Clancy

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Richard Girard, 166 Moore Street, Manchester stated:

I am here to talk about the proposed increases in downtown parking fees. Alderman Hirschmann in this morning's paper was exactly right. In year's past the City had structured its parking meter and parking lot rates to encourage long-term parkers to use the off street facilities so that the on street parking was there to promote turnover and to promote the use of businesses and offices downtown by the customers and clients of the businesses in the downtown. I am seriously concerned that the proposal recommended by the Traffic Committee will undo what has proven to be a very, very successful parking structure. By raising the rates in the garages so that they are equal to the rates of the meters on the street you are taking away the financial incentive that has proven overwhelmingly successful in pushing long-term parkers to our parking lots and parking

garages. The fact of the matter is that those garages are operating at the capacity they are today because the financial incentives that the system built in when it was altered years ago is doing the job it was supposed to do. Parking long ago by the City was determined to be an economic development tool for the downtown, not a revenue center. Granted you need to have revenue from the parking facilities and the parking structure, but to look at it as a cash cow is going to kill it. Economic development in the City, particularly in the downtown, is necessary to continue building our tax base to provide relief to all of our taxpayers. The revitalization of downtown has come a long way. If these parking fee increases pass, and I am not talking about anything related to the civic center, if these parking fee increases pass it will be yet another nail in the tire of momentum that the downtown redevelopment effort has put forward. The last rate people may be saying didn't have any impact on the development of the downtown. I disagree. I have spoken with several property owners in Manchester who said that their buildings are now losing money as a result of the last parking fee increase and when leases come due they are going to lose tenants. We can ill afford to have that happen. I urge the Board not to adopt the Traffic Committee's recommendations on parking fees. Thank you.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

I ask for a little extra time, your Honor and I will try to get through this as quick as I can. An idea for over at Central, I brought it up to Alderman Wihby awhile ago. Instead of putting portables over there, think about using French Hall and transporting some students up there in the morning for classes and back for lunch then you can take another group up for classes in the afternoon and then back and everyone goes home. Logistics is the only problem. That is just an idea. About a month ago, Sir, in these chambers an Alderman had some words for me. They were not very pleasant and they were demeaning. The scuttlebutt that I have gotten is that accusations have spread in different circles. I am here to tell you that whatever you heard from a certain Alderman here is not true and it is not my style. A little bit later, that Alderman went on TV and made some comments and personally attacked me. The worst thing that he said was...

Alderman Levasseur interjected your Honor I think we are going above and beyond the call of duty with this gentleman coming in here and making personal things. Let's just keep it to the business the way it is supposed to be done in the charter. This guy comes in here every month and starts causing problems every time he comes in here. If you have a problem with the TV show, call me personally.

Mayor Baines stated that is enough. This is a forum for public comment and that is why we are here.

Mr. Dodd stated I am going to keep it polite. This Alderman went on TV and made a statement that I was not a very nice person. That was a personal attack. I just want to tell you a little story real quick. About 11 years ago there was a gentleman whose wife and

daughter took sick in a very short time period. His ex son-in-law was with him for support when his wife passed away, took his daughter back and forth for chemo treatments and everything to go along with that and was there for him when she passed away and that gentleman came to his ex son-in-law and thanked him for helping him get through it. That is a true story and I was the ex son-in-law. Alderman Levasseur, before you talk about me and judge me, know me. You do not know me, Sir.

Mayor Baines advised that if there is no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Pinard duly seconded by Alderman Thibault all comments will be taken under advisement and further any written documentation presented will be received and filed.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented, and on motion of Alderman Cashin, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk